CLAIMS

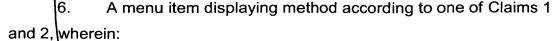1.   A menu item displaying method for an apparatus in which menu items are displayed on a screen and when a predetermined menu item is selected, a function corresponding to the selected menu item is executed, said menu item displaying method comprising:

determining whether a function corresponding to a menu item displayed on the screen can be executed; and

if it is determined that said function cannot be executed, disabling said menu item corresponding to said function from being selected and displaying a reason why said menu item cannot be selected.

2.   A menu item displaying method according to Claim 1, wherein a concise message indicating said reason is displayed in a field of said menu item.

3.   A menu item displaying method according to one of Claims 1 and 2, wherein said disabled menu item is displayed so as to be distinguished from non-disabled menu items.

4.   A menu item displaying method according to one of Claims 1 and 2, wherein when only a predetermined amount of data can be registered in a memory and when said predetermined amount of data is already registered in said memory, a message indicating that said menu item cannot be selected due to memory limitations is displayed in the field of said menu item for registering data.

5.   A menu item displaying method according to one of Claims 1 and 2, wherein when data that is set in a memory is to be read to have a predetermined function executed and when no data is set in said memory, a message indicating that said menu item cannot be selected due to no data being set in said memory is displayed in the field of said menu item for registering data.

6.   A menu item displaying method according to one of Claims 1 and 2, wherein:

said apparatus is a navigation apparatus; and

in the field of said menu item corresponding to a function which can be executed only while said navigation apparatus performs route guiding, when said route guidance is not in progress, a message indicating that said menu item cannot be selected due to the fact that route guiding is not in progress is displayed.

7.   A function executing apparatus for displaying menu items on a screen and, when a predetermined menu item is selected, for executing a function corresponding to the selected menu item, said function executing apparatus comprising:

an operation unit for displaying the menu items and performing a selection operation of said predetermined menu item;

a state storing unit for storing the state of the apparatus;

a determining unit for determining, based on the state of the apparatus stored in said state storing unit, whether a function corresponding to a menu item displayed on the screen can be executed;

a disabling unit for disabling said menu item corresponding to said function from being selected if it is determined by said determining unit that said function cannot be executed; and

a displaying control unit for displaying a reason why said menu item cannot be selected when it is determined by said determining unit that said function cannot be executed.

8.   A function executing apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein said display control unit displays, in a field of said menu item, a concise message which indicates the reason why said menu item cannot be selected.